

Red Shift/Green Shift: Problems with Training and Education Command's Education Continuum

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“Strategy is the craft of the warrior. Commanders must enact the craft, and troopers should know this Way.”¹ Miyamoto Musashi

Two dissimilar visions for the future of warfare have broken out within the Marine Corps. Marine Corps leaders, who ascribe to these respective visions, have aligned themselves with the disparate education theories resident in TECOM. The theories are vocational based learning, embodied in Training Command, and the more cognitive based, professional military education, embodied in Education Command. Currently, these poles in education theory work in a continuum. As entry level Marines progress through their careers, the training focus shifts from skills based vocational training to an intellectual based education². This organizational tension has created a strain which manifests itself on the ends of the continuum by placing a greater emphasis on education with entry level Marines, which one can term a “red shift”, or vocational training with senior Marines, which one can term a “green shift”. Unless our Corps better defines its future vision of warfare, TECOM will squander resources while mired in the red shift versus green shift debate.

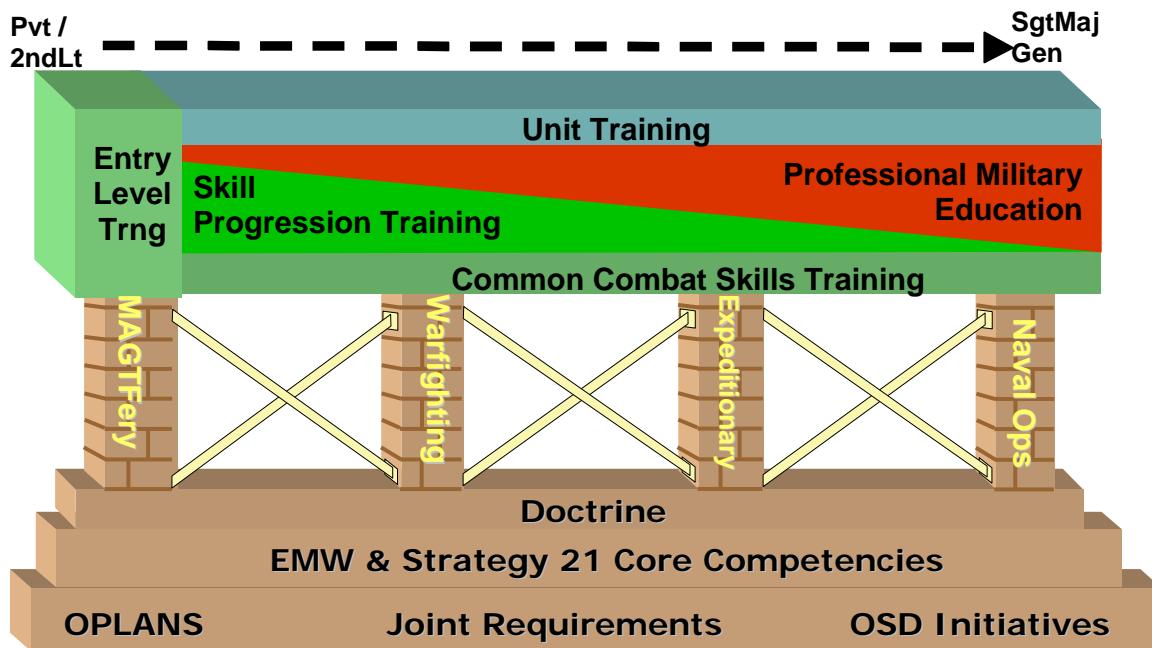
DEFINING THE PROBLEM

Training Command oversees the function of training Marines to perform specific tasks. Through the unit training management program, formal technical oriented schools, and the individual training standards program, the command’s mission is to “ensure Marines are trained to a common standard in order to meet the challenges of

¹ Miyamoto Musashi, *A Book of Five Rings*, trans. Victor Harris (Woodstock NY: Overlook Press, 1982), 37.

² Thomas A Benes, Charles Ferguson, “Marine Corps University’s Role in Developing Leaders for the 21st Century,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, April 2004, 12.

present and future operational environments".³ Under Training Command's tutelage, Marine's learn the technical skills essential to waging war. The training, aimed at entry level Marines, focuses on conducting repetitive application until the task of manipulating the equipment or unit is second nature. As Marines progress through their careers, the training focus begins to shift from skills oriented learning to a more educational based university philosophy⁴. Conversely, Education Command develops "leaders skilled in the arts of war and capable of critical and creative thinking, sound judgment, and reasoned decision-making"⁵. As demonstrated in figure 1, as careers mature, Marines utilize critical thinking skills rather than technically specific skills.



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Fig 1

³ Training Command, *Mission Statement*. March 2003 <<http://www.tecom.usmc.mil/tcom/>>> (10 January 2005)

⁴ Charles Ferguson and Dennis C Thompson. "Improving Professional Military Education at Marine Corps University," *Marine Corps Gazette*, July 2002 2002, 23.

⁵ Education Command, *Vision Statement*. 10 December 2004

<http://www.mcu.usmc.mil/mcu/mission_vision/mission_vision.htm>> (10 January 2005)

⁶ Major General Thomas S. Jones, "Training and Education Command", Brief to the Commandant of the Marine Corps, 7 December 2004.

Unfortunately, a problem has arisen within the Marine Corps which affect the continuum. Some leaders believe the Government War on Terror (GWOT) reflects the future of warfare and want to increase the education of the entry level Marine. Often termed the “Fourth Generation of Warfare (4GW),”⁷ These leaders believe “warfare will be widely dispersed and nonlinear. Distinctions between civilians and combatants will be nebulous, and operations will take place throughout the entire spectrum of society”.⁸ An enemy who uses the information and moral aspects of war to defeat the political will of the United States must be defeated by small unit commanders who have a rich cognitive decision making skills grounded in the cultural, morale and media issues surrounding the conflict. As articulated by Col T.X. Hammes, a major developer of the 4GW philosophy:

The strategic approach and tactical techniques of fourth generation warfare will require major changes in the way we educate, employ, structure, and train forces. Professional education, from initial-entry training to war-college level, will have to be broadened to deal with the wide spectrum of issues commanders will confront in a fourth generation conflict.⁹

The broadening of the cognitive skills of privates through captains places a stress on the left side of the continuum by shifting the red field down and to the left. In an area already filled by vocational based training, this educational encroachment can be termed a red shift. As demonstrated by figure 2. The resulting red shift, pushed by proponents of the 4GW vision, will overburden an already overwhelmed training schedule for the entry level Marine.

⁷ Colonel T. X. Hammes, *The Sling and The Stone: On War in the 21st Century* (St. Paul: Zenith Press, 2004), 2.

⁸ Scott E Ukeiley, “Developing the Moral Compass of the 21st Century NCO Corps,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, Sep 2003, 67.

⁹ Colonel T.X. Hammes, “The Evolution of War: The Fourth Generation,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, September 1994, 35

The competing vision of the future of warfare comes from leaders who believe that the blossoming of technology and precision munitions has revolutionized our speed and lethality. Grounded in the Department of Defenses' *Joint Vision 2020*, proponents of this camp believe that to achieve "full spectrum dominance and information superiority"¹⁰ our more senior Marines must learn specific information management and technical skills to utilize this power. The Marine Air Ground Task Force Staff (MAGTF) training programs reads, "Information Management, command and control, and information technology systems training must be integrated across the six warfighting functional areas as well as taught at training and educational institutions . . . This training needs to be sustained at the MAGTF-level."¹¹ Proponents of this camp are placing a stress on the right side of the continuum shifting the green, vocational, skills based, field up and to the right. As demonstrated by figure 2. This resulting green shift will force our senior officers and enlisted to learn and practice technical computer based skills instead of cultivating their critical thinking, judgment, and creativity.



¹² Decision making and cognitive skills are being required of our younger Marines. Examples include Cultural Studies, Ethics, Media and Decision Training. Aligned with 4GW Proponents

Training by our senior Marines in Information technology systems is the key to full spectrum dominance and information superiority.

Figure 2

¹⁰ Department of Defense, "Joint Vision 2020," (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 2000), 6 and 8.

¹¹ "Information Management Trends," *Marine Corps Gazette*, March 2003; 32.
<http://www.mstp.quantico.usmc.mil/publications/Articles/artMain.asp>

¹² Major General Jones, Brief to the Commandant. Author added red and green arrows and text boxes to illustrate the shift in educational and vocational focus.

THE SOLUTION

A bold statement to address these two competing shifts must occur first at the executive level of the Marine Corps. The doctrinal template promulgated by the Commandant of the Marine Corps, entitled Strategy 21, does not provide enough acuity on the vision of future conflict. Strategy 21 states that in the future “regional and internal instability will create situations where ethnic, economic, social and environmental stresses accentuate violence.” Yet the document states that to succeed “we must capitalize on innovation, experimentation and technology.” Lastly, Strategy 21 states that it “also supports *Joint Vision 2020* . . . the continuing evolution of the Armed Forces.”¹³ This ambiguity fuels the debate between the 4GW and the information technology camps while TECOM is left in the lurch. Due to the lack of time for students and money for TECOM, the Marine Corps cannot afford to conduct a simultaneous green and red shift in the continuum. A course must be set to address either the red shift or the green shift. Once the Commandant defines for TECOM how we will fight, they can allocate its resources to meet this vision and embrace the appropriate shift.

THE RED SHIFT

If the executive level of the Marine Corps defines the current conflict in Iraqi to be more the rule than the exception and mandates we begin to prepare for similar conflicts, TECOM could then begin to devote its resources to address an aggressive red shift. Education Command and Marine Corps University would take an increased role in TECOMs sphere of influence. Starting at the corporal’s course, there should be a significant emphasis placed on developing decision making skills¹⁴, cultural studies¹⁵,

¹³ Headquarters United States Marine Corps, “Strategy 21,” (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 2000), 6,7.

¹⁴ Captain Brendan B. McBreen, “I Want To Be ‘Ender’!,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, Apr 1998, 46.

and ethics¹⁶. Using interactive discussions, engaging lectures, situational exercises, and computer based decisions games, these Marines should be treated as first year college students. These cognitive skills would be developed at the expense of many of the technical skills taught within the corporal's course curriculum. The Basic School would shift away from the lecture method of teaching to a more case based method of study analogous to a graduate school program¹⁷. The student's curriculum would seek to extenuate education instead of the technical skills of land navigation and marksmanship.

The red shift would result in a greater emphasis on the cognitive thinking skills of the small unit leader and their ability to operate in disparate environments influencing the battle in both kinetic and non-kinetic ways. Conceptually, Marines would have a greater understanding of the complexities of the environments they are trying to influence. As true 4th generation warriors, small unit leaders could operate tactically while keeping a strategic mindset.

THE GREEN SHIFT

If the executive level of the Marine Corps decides that conventional large scale kinetic battles will characterize future conflicts and the current insurgency is the exception rather than the rule, then we need to harness the technical advances of the information revolution to become more lethal. To realize Joint Vision 2020's objectives of battlespace dominance and information superiority, our field grade officers and senior staff noncommissioned officers must become intimately familiar with the capabilities of the technological systems within their area of operations. This will result in a green shift

¹⁵ J. Agg, "Marine Take a Closer Look at Cultural Awareness Training," *Quantico Sentry*, 24 November 2004, sec 1A.

¹⁶ Ukeiley, 68

¹⁷ C. Roland Christensen, "Teaching and the Case Method," (Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing Division, 1989), 24.

forcing an increase of technical training within Marine Corps University historic sphere of influence. Training Command would grow in prominence as they would have to create individual and collective training standards which would apply to high level staffs physically moving, integrating, and assessing gross volumes of information. Meanwhile, the MAGTF Staff Training Program, who's mission is to "improve the warfighting skills of senior commanders and their staffs",¹⁸ would need to grow as they take the lead in teaching the information technology aspects to our senior Marines. Their technical skill oriented approach is the launching pad needed for a robust green shift. Beginning from the very simplistic operation of a single Microsoft Collaborative Tools workstation to managing or participating in a joint combat headquarters in which a three dimensional picture can be viewed from every vehicle, the field grade officers and senior enlisted must have the technical savvy to use these tools to win. The technical skills taught would revolve around common operating picture platforms. Students would receive intense hands on experience, incorporating these tools into every exercise. These training standards would have to be rehearsed and mastered while Marines are at Expeditionary Warfare School, Command and Staff, the General Officers Warfighting program, Staff Non-Commissioned Officer Academy, First Sergeant's Course, and Sergeants Major / Master Gunnery Sergeants Symposium.

The green shift would result in less time examining the art of war and leadership. Far less time would be devoted to cognitive development in areas such as cultural, ethics or media impacts of war. The curriculum of Marine Corps University would contain less time for writing and discussing contemporary and historical events; rather by focusing on

¹⁸ MAGTF Staff Training Program, *Training the First to Fight*, 11 January 2005, <<<http://www.mstp.quantico.usmc.mil/>>>

the ability to marshal information, dominate the battlespace, and employ precision munitions, the Corps would greatly enhance their effects on a conventional enemy.

THE MOST DANGEROUS COURSE OF ACTION: NO ONE DECIDES

Many argue that we should not commit to either vision of the future of warfare but take a middle road. By attempting to prepare for both visions of warfare, we will not adequately prepare for either style of conflict. With the current conflict, no room exists for cost increases within the TECOM budget. Attempting to place a comprehensive language, ethics and writing program throughout the Marine Corps would be costly. Putting a Toughbook-29 computer with the C2PC software in front of every student enrolled in every formal school would be crippling to a TECOM budget already stripped due to war requirements. Monetary cost, however, stings the least when compared to the cost in the Marines time. With limited time in formal school and with current deployment schedules, adding another learning objective means something else goes untaught. There is no white space on the continuum for additional tactics, techniques or procedures.

Adding white space is TECOMs solution to the shift phenomena. Through initiatives such as curriculum mapping study, operating forces feedback, military occupational specialty road map, and endowed chairs,¹⁹ TECOM is attempting alleviate the learning objective burden; however, these initiatives merely attempt to better organize the continuum. Reducing overlap and introducing the appropriate educational objective at the appropriate rank merely serves to delay the problem. The fundamental problem remains. There are two different visions of the future of warfare requiring too many educational objectives, which are philosophically opposed, taught and managed by two

¹⁹ Benes and Ferguson, 12

different commands. TECOM and the Marine Corps must commit itself; in resources and in time to one of the competing visions of the future of warfare.

This debate has more far reaching causes and effects than how best to prepare our Marines for war. It goes to the heart of how the Marine Corps will define itself for the next half century. Will we be fourth generation warriors fighting in dispersed small units wielding cultural, moral and communicative savvy or will we be technically proficient information warriors with our commanders having an unprecedented battlespace vision and employing precision munitions? The Corps has reached a cross roads and must decide in which direction to travel. Each direction is accompanied by a significant change in the TECOM training and education continuum. The accompanying red shift or green shift will have far reaching consequences; however, taking the middle ground will only dilute the already thin resources of time, money, and focus.

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